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AUTHOR Carter, Beverly
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ABSTRACT

A study examined the reading achievement of students who attended preschool. Subjects for the study were 2 groups of 30 African American students, randomly selected from 120 second-grade students in a Chicago area public school, 48 of whom had attended preschool and 72 who had not. Results from the 1995 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills reading subtest were used as a posttest. A t-test for independent samples was done on these 2 sets of scores to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in reading achievement between the 2 groups. Results indicated that there was an increase in reading achievement for the experimental group. Findings reveal agreement with earlier findings of Hollis Scarborough, Wanda Dobrich, and Maria Hager (1991) that any program or home which provides experiences in the development of these perceptual, intellectual, emotional, experimental, and language skills should enhance the child's ability to learn to read. (Contains one table of data and 13 references.) (CR)

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ED 395 297

The effects of preschool on the reading achievement of second grade students.

BEVERLY CARTER

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How important are the preschool years for the development of the child as compared with the remainder of his life span ? Does participation in a preschool program have any effect on later achievement ? Society has changed from the traditional family life style what are the effects of these changes upon the development of young children. By exposing children to different books at an early age through preschool activities and experiences we are teaching the children to love reading. In this study we will look at two groups of second grade students, one group attended preschool, and one group did not attend preschool. Reading scores will be compared to see if the students who attended preschool has an higher reading achievement than students who did not attend preschool.

Will check cumilative cards for record of preschool attendance and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for reading scores.

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Procedures

Population / Sample

The population for this study includes 120 second grade students. The students attend Luke O'Toole Elementary School located in the Englewood area. The population is composed of 100% African American students from low income families,

Records were evaluated to determine which students attended preschool and those who did not attend preschool. From the 120 second grade students, the school records showed that 48 students attended preschool, while 72 did not attend preschool. Thirty students were randomly selected from each group. Reading test scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were compared to determine if any reading achievement from students who attended preschool.

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills are administered each spring to students in Chicago's Public elementary schools. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills is used to measure growth in Reading, Math, Social Studies and Science. The results from the Reading portion of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills administered during the spring 1995 school year will be used in this study. The Cumilative records are initiated during registration when entering school for the first time. Each year grades, room, Teacher, and tests scorces are placed on this card and past to the next classroom.This will be used to determine what students attended preschool in a Chicago Public school program.

The McMillan sisters open the first Nursery School in 1908. Their focus was to increase the health, and general welfare of children living in slum areas of the city. The federal goverment under the Works Progress Adminstration became interested in Nursery School in 1930 and gave their support. The purpose was to help minimize some of the damaging effects from the depression on children and families and also provide Teachers with employment. With the signing of the Econmic Opportunity Act in 1964, federal support again went to Early Childhood Education. Headstart schools open the summer of "65" and then extended to full year programs. Their aim was to help culturally disadvantaged children become better prepare for formal school experince. In April 1969 President Nixon announced the creation of an office of child development directly under the secretary of the department of health, Education, and Welfare (Read 1981). Today there are many different types of preschool programs such as Day Care, Headstart, Nursery School, and Prekindergarten. Each has its own curriculum to reinforce their goals and philosophy.

There are many activities that foster children's social intellectual, sensory, and language growth. These activities build readiness for reading instruction as they do for learning in all curriculm areas. Children need opportunities to have experiences that relates to school activities. Play is the most important part of development in the early years. This symbolic enrichment is needed for learning to read. (Piccinallo 1988) children in the preschool programs come eager to learn, they usually brings some experience with books with them. They enjoy being read to and make up stories as their knownledge increases. The total child has to develop through activities and hands on experiences. They need to have an opportunity for dramatic play, field trips, storytelling, and exploring their environment. Children can best grow in their use of language through opportunities to talk to attentive listeners about things they are interested in. These skills are reinforce using materials such as memory games, puzzles, beads, blocks and puppets. The ability to perceive and distingushing among sounds. The preschool programs provides the child with a variety of activities needed for reading readiness (Petty, Petty, Becking 1985).

Research indicate that early literacy is the key to better reading. It is noted that literacy skills will almost inevitably develop if the child is placed in a literate environment and given some encouragement. It is said that one thing that all good readers and writers have in common is that they were all read to as children (Wells 1988). Children who are introduce to books and other reading readiness skills at a early age has an advantage to their development. These children are read to and encourage to talk about what is read. Parents who read to their children are often interested in books and are usually good readers. Instructional and expose variables, as well as language skills variables, appear to influence the development of reading skills. Through story interaction children may learn how to interpretthe decontext-ualized language they will later encounter in a school setting (Thoreson and Dale 1992). One study found that 50% of intellectual development takes place between conception and age 4, 40% between ages 4 and 8, and 20% between ages 8 and 17 (Bloom 1984). Rearch on emergent literacy also has some important implications for literacy training, both in the home and at school(Payne, Whitehurst, Angell).

Murphy (1972) has suggested that children from low social level homes do not play with words or materials as middle class children do. The ability to discriminate seemingly random noise and movement in the home of the disadvantage child. There is usually high levels of noise but the children do not receive the repetion, explanation and general pattern of sounds needed to develop the capacity to make fine auditory disermations. Disadvantage children spend less time looking at visual patterns in experimental situations than middle class children, and so visual perception may not be fully developed for learning to read. For years it has been known that there is a gap between the performance of disadvantage and middle class children on intelligence and achievement tests. There has been a study to see the literacy concepts of low and middle class four year olds entering preschool. The results from this study reflect the trend in which children from middle class homes outperformed their counterparts. Findings indicated that even as early as 48 months of age, many children from low income homes are at a distinct disadvantage when copare with their middle class peers in understanding spoken language (Smith and Dixon 1995). What the research and educators are saying then is that disadvantage children show deficiences in linguistic usage, fine auditory discrimination, visual perception and reasoning ability.

While there is a growing amount of research about the importance of the early years in education. They tend to explore the effects if any on the reading achievements of the second grade students. There are studies that determine that preschool programs make a big difference in children at risk. There was a study that children who attends preschool usually graduates from high school. A recent review of several studies concludes that preschool programs that provides highly structure showed greater gains in reading achievements than programs that are less structure. The kinds of pre-reading experiences provided differ from one program to another. As we examine the research on reading readiness we might say that perceptual, intellectual, emotioal, experiental and language factors are important to the development in order to learn to read (Smith 1989). Haskins (1989) reviewed information on the development and performance of preschool particicipants once they were between the ages of 9 and 19 years old. Three years later they did a follow up study which showed that on reading subtests results were statistically signifiant only at third grade. Miller and Bizzell (1983) compare four different preschool programs but found that at the end of second grade the children showed losses from their end of preschool scores. While it is generally accepted that preschool experience is important, especially for at risk children, there may not be an different in academic achievement in reading.

Therefore their is a need to determine the correlation between preschool and second grade reading achievement.

Findings of the Study

The samples for the study included second grade students of O'Toole Elementary school. Each spring students take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. From these second grade students, two groups were randomly selected. One group attended perschool while the other group did not attend preschool. Results from the 1995 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills reading subtest was used as a posttest. A t-test for the independent samples was done on these two sets of scores to determine if there was a statisically significant different in reading achievement of second grade students who attended preschool than students who did not attend preschool.

Further examination of the 1995 means posttest scores reveals that the experimental group mean in reading is 0.8942 and the control group mean in reading is 0.6236. Thus there is a increase in reading achievement for the experimental group.

The t- score for the 1995 results is 2.88, and the table t- is 2.000. Overall the data leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis; The students that attended preschool will have a significantly higher reading achievement than students who did not attend preschool.

Reading

Test Posttest	Experimental N=30	Control N=30	t
M	2.14	2.06	2.88
SD	0.8942	0.6236	
DF=58	P.>.05		

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if students who attended preschool has a higher reading achievement than students who did not attend preschool. The study showed that the students who attended preschool have a higher significantly higher reading achievement scores than students who did not attend preschool, as measure by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Conclusions

The results of research findings in this study indicate that the students that attended preschool had a significantly higher reading scores than students who did not attend preschool. The results of this study did not compare with the results of this study did not compare with the results findings in the Review of Literature.

The Review of Literature states that their is a variety of variables that enhance later reading achievements such as social class, types of preschool programs and environment. The research findings in this study appears to be in agreement with the findings of Scarborough H., Dobrich W. and Hager M. (1991) that any program or home which provides experiences in the development of these perceptual, intellectual, emotional, experimental, and language, skills, should enhance the child's ability to learn to read.

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